



## SECRETARY OF STATE STATE OF INDIANA

Todd Rokita  
Secretary of State

August 22, 2008

Dear Election Administrator:

By now, you are likely planning poll worker training sessions, preparing to program voting machines and finalizing your ballot configurations for November's General Election. I appreciate the hours you, your staff, and your volunteers are devoting to administering the coming election. On behalf of Hoosier voters and taxpayers, I thank you for your commitment to running a fair and accurate election.

There are a few important items that I believe should be a high priority in all counties, and I ask that you give serious consideration to multiple examinations of each item from now to the election. All of these suggestions are intended to ensure that you are effectively prepared for extraordinary turnout at the polls this November.

### **Ballots**

As you know, the May Primary Election created unprecedented turnout at the polls. Some precincts either ran out of ballots or were very close. By all accounts, we could see turnout records statewide. Please keep in mind, spending more on extra ballots is an insurance policy that will not only help ensure your success on Election Day, it may very well prevent you, your county, and our state from being covered in the national media for poor election planning.

- It is vitally important for counties that use optical scan voting systems to prepare for very high voter turnout. For example, during the 2008 Primary one county increased ballot copies by 30% the normal preparation due to expectations of heavy turnout. But, the actual election result included an increase of over 56%, leading to huge ballot shortages, judicial interaction, and unsatisfied voters.
- Counties that use optical scan voting systems and DRE for HAVA accessibility requirements should remind poll workers to use the DRE in the event of ballot shortage emergencies.
- Counties that use optical scan voting systems and the AutoMark® device for HAVA accessibility will not have the option of using a DRE in emergencies and should be prepared for almost 100% turnout.
- It is also important for counties that utilize DRE voting systems to ensure there are plenty of emergency paper ballots, should they be necessary.

## **Voting Machines**

As detailed in the HAVA requirements and general best practices, the following summarizes important guidelines of working with voting systems.

- I would urge you to contact your vendor and ensure that the software and firmware installed on your voting equipment is the exact version certified by the Indiana Election Commission.
- A chain of custody procedure should be in place to ensure there is not any tampering of the voting equipment. This should include the bi-partisan handling and inspection of equipment.
- Remind your inspectors to review the accuracy of the ballot prior to opening the polls on Election Day and encourage poll workers to verify that the number of voters who signed the poll book matches the number of votes cast on the machines.
- Consider all results as unofficial until you can verify them against the physical data brought to you from each polling place.
- Finally, you should ensure that at least one accessible voting machine is present and operational on Election Day in each polling place. It is not sufficient to have the machine physically there; it must be operational and available to ANY voter to use.

## **Polling Places**

I know most election administrators have worked hard to ensure all polling places are accessible as required under the Help America Vote Act. Please remember these general guidelines:

- You should have a contingency plan in place should a polling place need to be moved.
- Polling places that have been relocated should have a notice posted at the entrance directing voters to the new location.
- Polling places should open promptly at 6 am local prevailing time (not Indianapolis time).
- As we receive calls throughout the day regarding accessibility or fraud concerns we will notify you so that you are able to address the problem.

## **Poll Workers**

It is extremely important to ensure poll-workers are well-trained and abundant. There are some things you can do to ensure these important citizen-leaders are ready and your precinct boards are complete.

- Establish a dedicated telephone line for poll-workers to call in the event of an emergency.
- Attend one of the train-the-trainer sessions offered during the week of your association's district meetings in early September, or the following week in Indianapolis.
- Use the state-offered and uniform Election Day Handbook as a guide and reference for your poll-workers in each polling place.
- Encourage your poll-workers to visit our website to access videos on machine operation and Election Day procedures to further complement your training regimen. Please see <http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/hava/pollworkertraining.html> for information.

- Work with local non-profit or faith based institutions to recruit poll workers and encourage them to donate their stipends to the charity of their choice through the Donate for Democracy program. Please see [www.DonateforDemocracy.in.gov](http://www.DonateforDemocracy.in.gov) for more information.
- If approved by the County Election Board, 16 and 17 year-old poll workers may help on Election Day as poll workers or as extra help in the office through the Election Day LIVE program. Permission must be granted by local high schools for students to participate. Please see [www.workthepolls.in.gov](http://www.workthepolls.in.gov) for more information.
- You may also want to call other political parties in your county and ask them for names of potential poll workers. The Libertarian or Green Party may have some voters that would be willing to be placed in open spots.
- I would also encourage you to use your local media to ask for help, if needed.

### **Voters and Voting**

Voters should be informed of their rights and responsibilities before casting a ballot in the 2008 General Election.

- **Encourage voters to vote absentee early to help reduce negative impacts (long lines, ballot shortages, and poll-worker and voter confusion) to the voting process that will occur with extraordinary turnout on Election Day.**
- **Consider using Satellite Absentee voting options already permitted by state statute, to improve the convenience and availability of early voting options for your county's voters.**
- The Voter's Bill of Rights must be posted for voters of every precinct. (Chute posters are also available to remind voters of the Photo ID requirement before entering the polling location.)
- Outreach Publications are available for voters, including the Indiana Voter's Information Guide and the 5 Things You Need to Know on Election Day Post Card, if not through your office directly, on the Secretary of State's website, [www.sos.in.gov/elections](http://www.sos.in.gov/elections).
- The Election Division website and [www.photoID.IN.gov](http://www.photoID.IN.gov) also provide a wealth of information for voters looking for additional details.
- Remind poll workers that no voter is to be turned away on Election Day, even if the voter does not have the required photo ID. Provisional ballots should always be offered as a last resort.
- Make sure that voters fully cast their ballot so they do not become a "floating voter". Floating voter refers to a voter who starts to vote on a voting machine, but does not complete the voting process. If a voter does not complete the voting process (ie. cast their ballot), the ballot should be voided or canceled. I encourage you to develop guidelines for this situation and include this information in your poll worker training.

### **Emergencies**

I believe that voting for citizens to lead our government is a fundamental principle of our state and country. Because of this belief, I do not think any election should be delayed, and I believe that voting should proceed as scheduled in every precinct in Indiana. As I suggested to all counties in 2004, it is important to have a contingency plan in place in the event a polling place is unavailable for some reason.

- In most counties, the county executive branch is responsible for designating polling places before an election. It is important for county election administrators and the county executive to plan for the establishment of emergency polling places in the event of an emergency.
- Be prepared to include alternate locations and be able to quickly notify local media if changes are necessary.
- Be prepared to post signs at or near the polling place originally designated for voters of that precinct in the event of relocation.

The Hoosier Voter Hotline, 1-866-IN-1-VOTE (1-866-461-8683), is available for voters wishing to verify their voter registration or polling location. Additionally, if voters have concerns about accessibility in their polling place, or instances of possible election fraud please refer them to the hotline for more information on the legal requirements and grievance procedure.

Thank you for taking the time to review the items above. If you have questions, please contact our HAVA Administrator, Joe McLain by email at [havaadministrator@sos.in.gov](mailto:havaadministrator@sos.in.gov) or by phone at (317) 234-8683, or our HAVA Education and Outreach Director, Julia Bauler by email at [jbauler@sos.in.gov](mailto:jbauler@sos.in.gov) or by phone at (317) 232-6541.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Rokita".

Todd Rokita  
Indiana Secretary of State

cc: County Commissioners  
cc: County Council Members